

# INTEGRITY



On this the day  
that saw thy birth  
Sing the new song  
of ransomed~  
Earth:

DECEMBER 1947

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NE OF the dangers that confronts an apostolate dealing with social problems is that the preoccupation with the social order can become as complete in the apostle as it is in those who seek their beatitude in it. So complex a thing is the modern social scene that it exercises an enchantment over those who work against it as well as those who move with its tide. Hate can be as binding as love.

The fanatical prohibitionist is as much a slave to drink as the chronic drunkard. The complete revolutionary is one with the reactionary in this: that they both are hypnotized by the performance taking place in our daily three-ring circus.

The feast of Christmas should shake us loose from the fascination of the passing parade. Our idealism no longer should focus through the eyes of Adam, the man pre-eminent, the dominator of the world, but rather, since this great thing has happened, we must look upward and outward through the eyes of a Divine Infant. From His manger Christ saw a world alive with God.

The Christ-Child is the center and periphery of a new order. Never again can the world of man be the same, and things are no longer what they seem. What was once but a stable for animals, is now a Temple of God. What was once merely an ass is now a sacramental reminding men from henceforth of the Natal Vigil. What was once a shepherd is now a Prince, brother to Christ the King. What was once a minor town of a minor tribe is now the seat of Christendom, the root site of God's new order for His children. What was once steel, or wood, or clay, now is gold to be beaten into chalices and mirrors to cup and reflect the glory of the Word Incarnate.

Why try to regain the heights of Eden now that Christ has lifted us up above the realm of man and set our feet in the foothills of Divinity? We have been adopted into the Divine Family by the magnificent blessing of Christ's becoming our blood Brother. It would be the most false kind of humility now to try to be a nice sort of homo sapiens, to regain a merely human dignity, to reorder the world under the dominion of human reason. To do this would be to besiege a fortress already taken. It would be a false piety to call Adam "Father," and to stand in awe of the mystery of man or the works of men, now that the Creator has condescended to make Himself one with us.

Yes, we have men and the works of men, their laws, their order and their sciences, and these things are jewels. Now that Christ is with us these are jewels at the disposition of a Prince. They are jewels in the crown of a King Who brings a new order to a new Principality.

From now on, whenever men place one brick upon another will be in affirmation or in denial of the God-Man. The denials will more detract from His Glory or His Authority than does a shadow lessen the power of the sun. From now on, the light is there in the four corners of the sky, and there is no darkness that can ever put it out.

THE EDITORS

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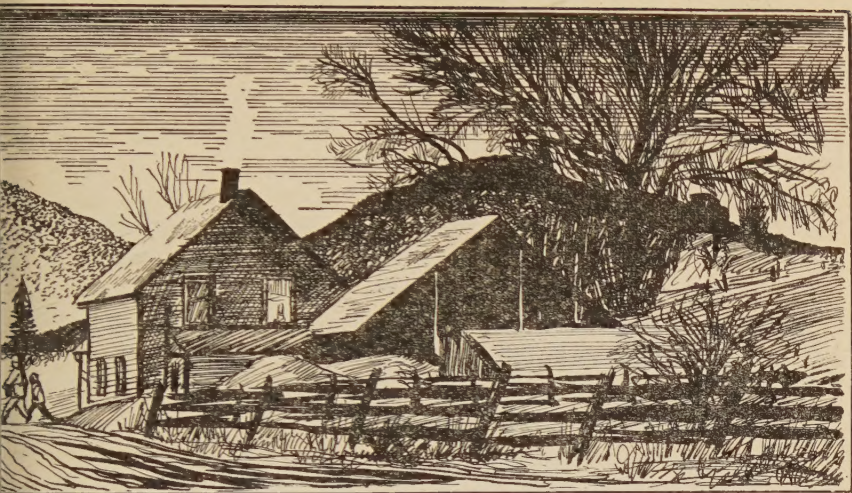
The editors and staff are more than happy to comply with the traditional custom of well-wishing at this season of the year. During the past year we have met many of our readers and have exchanged considerable correspondence with many more of them. These pleasant experiences have left us with the certainty that we enjoy a relation with our readers more friendly and intimate than is the usual lot of publishers.

So, when we do express our fondest wish that the graces and blessings of the Nativity be great among you, our only regret is that we cannot exchange these greetings face to face.

ALL OF US







## Sitting In Darkness

Jim Chatfield buttoned up his sheepskin, pulled on mittens, and opened the kitchen door. Reluctantly he stepped out into the night. The cold hit his nose like the jab of a stick. A polar wind cut across his cheeks. He slammed the door.

Hunching his collar around his ears and turning his back to the wind, he tacked clumsily across the dooryard to the barn, a tall farmer lumpy with clothes, stumbling sleepily to chores on a winter morning.

Overhead, a motor droned frostily. Furtively, he glanced up. The stars, crystal and aloof, winked vacantly in their icy vastness. Mindless, myriad, they spilled across the upper darkness like strewn glass. The red and green outboard lights of the dawn mail to Boston crawled tinnily through Cassiopeia.

Well, no snow on Christmas—Jacky couldn't use the sled today.

The door to the milkroom yielded stubbornly on rusty rollers. He stepped quickly inside, letting it slide shut behind him while he groped for the light. The whitewashed walls of the little room stared stonily at him in the harsh glare. His breath steamed like dragon smoke. Mechanically, he turned on the milking machine motor; the soft *slug*, *slug* of its exhaust warmed the silence. The stacked milk cans, the pails, the galvanized sink, the cooler filmed with frost, looked cold. He shivered, turned on the hot water tap. While waiting for the water to warm, he snapped on the radio.

*God rest you merry, gentlemen . . .*

Wearily he twisted the knob.

*. . . and may all your Christmases . . .*

Irritably, he twirled it again. The theme song of the Corn Huskers filled the room, floated out into the barn. The cows were waking; they arose slowly, breathing heavily and rattling their stanchions. He touched his fingers to the water experimentally, luxuriated a moment in warmth. Then he lifted the teat-cups off the sterilizer rack, rinsed them briefly and slipped the rubbers on the pulsator.

Where the heck was Jacky?

Scowling, he assembled the milking machines and carried them out into the barn, at the end of the alley between the two rows of rumbling. The animals stirred, swished their tails lazily in placid expectation of grain. As he started back to the milkroom, a low moo followed by a quavery, nasal blat made him hesitate.

Jim Chatfield grinned.

He sauntered over to the maternity pen in the corner and leaned happily over the high-boarded side. There she was. His new foundation dam: Ardleigh Highbrook Mariette—Big Brown, to him—sprawled in the hay in swollen contentment, chewing her cud. And snoozing curled at her side, the thriftiest Guernsey calf you ever saw; heifer calf, too. His mouth smirked a little—here was a Christmas present he had earned—then tightened as he recalled the night before.

Big Brown had started bellowing about ten; the calf was stuck. He'd had to tie a rope to its front feet and pull it out. It was blue—had almost lost it. His wife had come down about eleven, had found him chaffing the heifer with a towel.

"Are you going to take care of cows all night?"

"I got to clean up—she ain't dropped her afterbirth. Why—something wrong?"

"Oh, no. Only, the tree isn't all decorated yet. And the children's presents . . ."

Not a word about the calf. Could he help it if it had to be born on Christmas Eve? Raise it right, milk nine thousand pounds some day.

"Merry Christmas, Pa!" The barn door slammed, letting in a cold blast.

He left the pen, strode down the alley to the boy.

"Merry Christmas, Jacky."

"I said it first, I beat ya!" Grinning, he came up to his father, thin child of ten, in an old coat too short for his growth. Shining with delight and the cold, his face was almost as red as his earmuffs.

"How come you're late?" Hands on hips, feigning disapproval, he towered over the boy.

"I didn't peek! Honest, Pa!" The grin faded. "I didn't go near . . ."

"Atta boy." He smiled broadly to show he was kidding. The child beamed—he got it. "Now look, son. That big old milk truck's gonna be standin' out there in about an hour. So let's hop to it and git squared."



way. Then we can go up the house and look at the tree and see what my Claus left ya. Okay?"

"Okay, Pa."

"Shoot the grain to 'em, boy." He dismissed the child with an affectionate pat.

"Pa?"

"Yes, Jacky?"

"It's Christmas, Pa."

"So?"

"Can I give the girls an extra measure of grain?"

His father chuckled. "You do that, boy," he said. "You do that little thing." He turned and strode toward the milkroom. "Merry Christmas, girls," the boy sang out merrily, rounding the mangers toward the feed-chute.

Jim Chatfield smiled as he drew off some water in a bucket, spilled a squirt of CN in it, and yanked a couple of towels from a rack. The feed was all right; thought of the animals. He considered with pleasure his advantage over his neighbors. Poor old Lundberg—four girls. And Hecalf's only boy working in a factory. But Jacky was a farmer. It was his son—you could see it.

*And now, in keepin' with the spirit of the season, Hank and his musical saw are gonna give us that grand old hymn, "Away in a Manger" . . .*

Stupid radio. Why did he have it on? He seldom listened to it. Habit, he supposed. Made noise. Thawed out the barn.

He dropped a towel in the bucket, slung one over his shoulder and went out in the dairy. He straddled the manure gutter, began washing Dynamo. Through the stanchions, he could see Jacky bent over his grain tub, dumping scoops of the brown meal in the mangers, chatting playfully with the cows.

"There you are, Dynamo, that's for you. Moneybag, you stop eatin', I'm gonna give you yours in a second." The tub scraped on the concrete walk as the boy dragged it from one animal to the next.

Jim Chatfield finished rubbing Dynamo's bag, set a milking machine between her legs.

"Pa." The boy had stopped for a breather.

"What is it?" He plugged in on the airline, slipped on the teat cups. The pulsator bobbed rhythmically: *fft, fft, fft . . .*

"Was Jesus really born in a manger, like they say?"

"Sure, why?"

"What did Saint Joseph do with the cows in the stanchions?"

"Just let 'em walk around, I guess. Hold still, Susie." He slipped the other machine on the cow across the alley.

"They'd plop all over the barn, if he did that."

"Mebbe it was a different kind of a manger." He bent over to wa  
Moneybag. She jumped at his touch.

"Like what?"

"Like a hay-rack fer young stock." He examined the cow's udder.  
"Hello—Jacky, run in the milkhouse and git me the Bag Balm."

"What's the matter?"

"Moneybag's got a cut teat."

"Oh." The boy ambled off. "All the same, it don't seem like a ve  
good place to put a baby."

"The Bag Balm!"

"Okay, okay." The boy quickened pace.

Frowning, Jim Chatfield changed the machine from Dynamo  
Moneybag. She shifted her weight uneasily. He squatted beside h  
blocked her legs with his arm so that she couldn't kick off the machin

"Easy, baby, easy," he murmured, stroking her side soothingly.  
Darned old sway-back; second time in six months she'd stepped  
herself. The leg came up swiftly, whacked him like the blow of a plan  
"Damn you, take it easy!" he bellowed.

Humming with the radio, the boy came up to him, set the can  
ointment on the floor. "Shouldn't cuss on Christmas, Pa," he joked.

"You get that machine off Susie before her whole udder ge  
sucked in, and never mind about me!" bellowed his father.

The boy crossed the aisle, quickly changed the machine. The rac  
blared on.

*Well, Hank, what did Santy leave in yer stockin' this mornin'?*

*Why, a sack of that big Red-G layin' mash naturally. Ha, ha, ha ...*

The two worked in silence a moment. The boy returned to l  
grain tub. His father pulled the machine off Moneybag, began masse  
ing her with ointment.

A small voice asked, "Pa?"

"What is it?"

"Do you think a Paris Comet is as good a sled as a Flexible Flyer?"

"I dunno."

"Bobby Hickox says it is."

"Yeah?"

"He says it's made by the same company."

"Mebbe it is."

"Pa."

"Yes?"

"Ya know what I wrote to Santa Claus?"

"No, what?"

"I said: 'If ya don't have a Flexible Flyer, a Paris Comet is  
right.' That was in case."



"In case what?"

"In case he doesn't have enough Flexible Flyers to go around."

"Oh." Jim Chatfield stepped across the alley, unhooked the milker. Susie lowed complainingly, strained against her stanchion. "Better git some grain over here," he muttered, stumbling off to the milkroom with a machine in either hand.

"Git your nose outa there, Bucky, I got work to do," the boy was saying. The tub bumped along the walk. He sang softly to himself: Jingle bells, jingle bells . . ."

Wearily, Jim Chatfield took the covers off the machines and set them on the drainboard of the sink. He wrenched the lid off an empty can, dropped the strainer in place, and poured through the hot frothy milk.

You couldn't win. No matter what you did, you couldn't win.

Big Brown had been a buy—no doubt about it. Even old Lundberg, who never had a good word for anything, had nodded his head as he looked her over, growling, "Yaw, yaw," in his Swedish way. But money spent was money spent, even for a bargain. It had meant no new truck that fall. He hadn't minded, had even congratulated himself, what with the price of trucks, and all.

But he hadn't figured things would be so skimpy at Christmas.

He slammed the covers on the machines, returned to the barn, began the monotonous cycle again: wash, dry, milk, wash, dry, milk . . . t, fft, fft . . .

He thought about the tree in the parlor—even that looked pinding. He'd been sawing wood . . . he and Jacky had gone up to the woodlot in the afternoon . . . it was getting dark, they hadn't had much time . . . When he'd got around to trimming it, he guessed he hadn'tussed with it like he should—getting the calf born had taken the starch right out of him. And at the foot of the tree, the presents: a couple of gee-gaws for the baby, a sweater and a new cook pot for the wife . . . and Jacky's old sled, fixed up and painted over.

*. . . and now, for our regular five-minute newscast, we take you direct to . . .*

"I'm finished, Pa." The thin figure stood beside him, shivering lightly, fists jammed in the torn pockets of the too-small coat.

"Take a rest, son."

"Pa." The boy's face was solemn.

"Yes."

"You know what Bobby Hickox says?"

"No, what?"

"Bobby Hickox says"—the boy spoke gravely, watching his father's reaction—"that Santa Claus is your old man."

"That so?" Jim Chatfield stopped to take off a machine. "What? you tell him?"

"I told him he was full of baloney," the boy answered fiercely. His father was silent. "Pa," he asked anxiously, "you're not Santa Claus are you?"

Jim Chatfield stepped out on the walk. He stood facing the boy. For a moment he said nothing. Then he shook his head slowly. "No son," he said sadly, "I ain't no Sanny Claus."

He placed his hand on the boy's head and gave it a little shake. The boy smiled back uncertainly. Jim Chatfield bent over, picked up the machine and lugged it off to the milkroom.

*It is almost noon here in Europe. Worshippers are crowding the churches of the city, but as they hurry through the streets, there is little joy on their faces. Fuel rations have again been cut. Emergency shipments are being rushed from the Ruhr, but heavy snows hamper all rail movements. The communists threaten . . .*

Jim Chatfield banged the lid off an empty, transferred the strainer and heaved the full can into the cooler with a splash. The agitator was broken; he churned the icy water with a sawed-off canoe paddle.

He remembered the last time he and Jacky had been down store. He'd been buying a box of filters. The counters were littered with Christmas stuff.

"Can I look around, Pa?" the boy had asked.

"Sure, sure. Go ahead, Jacky." He had resumed his discussion with Burt about the coming auction over on Chestnut Hill.

"Pa! Pa! They got it—the sled I was talkin' about! Can I show ya, Pa?" Grinning from ear to ear, the boy had dragged him over to a stack of sleds. "No, not that one, the big one! See how the runners bend around? Streamlined, Pa. Do ya think Santa Claus might bring me that one, huh?" He had glanced at the tag: \$7.95.

Eight dollars would have made the boy's Christmas. Had he been a stinker, for eight lousy bucks?

He tried to persuade himself that he had not. He told himself that Christmas was supposed to be something more than a lot of junky toys that cost too much. Christmas was the birthday of a Baby Who was born poor on purpose to show people how to live right. Wasn't that what he was trying to do? He wasn't looking for a million dollars; he was only trying to build up the farm, make a living. Why, with the new calf, and the other stock he'd raise out of Big Brown, he'd make enough milk to buy a dozen sleds for Christmas. Why, in a few years . . .

But he did not believe himself. The time for new sleds was now, not in a few years. He sensed that the "something more" that Christmas



meant was not in him. He saw himself as an unfeeling man, who pushed his wife and children and begrudged them Christmas as a nuisance that interfered with the work.

Well, there was nothing he could do about it now. He'd have to take his medicine; stand by the boy at the tree and watch his joy die, watch him try to smile, make the best of it, be a little man. Next year, maybe . . . but there was nothing he could do now. Except let the kid down easy. He assembled the machine, went out into the barn.

*Oh come, all ye faithful . . .*

The boy's back was to him. He stood as he had left him, looking off down the alley, hands still dug into the old coat, his shoulders hunched against the cold.

Jim Chatfield plugged in the machine, slipped the cups on Sally, then straightened up and draped his arms over the cow's spine. He did not look at his son.

He asked: "Hear that feller on the radio?"

The child, lost in thought, recollected himself. "What? Oh . . . yeah . . . some."

"Tough, over there in Europe."

"I guess so."

The two were silent. Jacky looked at the floor, traced an arc on the concrete with his shoe.

The father began again. "Looks to me like a lot of them little boys and girls over there ain't gonna have much of a Christmas, this year."

The boy frowned. Troubled, he looked at his father. "Won't Santa Claus take care of them?"

"Don't hardly seem so."

"Why not? Doesn't he want to make them happy? Isn't Santa a good man? Mom says he's a *saint*. A saint wouldn't let the little children be unhappy, would he?"

"Well, son, I'll tell ya." He dropped his voice to a confidential tone. "There's so many poor folks over there, so many kids without any toys, or warm clothes, or shoes . . . I wouldn't be surprised if Sanny Claus just didn't have enough things to go around."

The boy thought it over, said stubbornly: "It don't seem very fair."

"No, it don't, son." Jim Chatfield stepped out in the aisle, fished the rag out of the pail of disinfectant and slowly began washing another cow. "That's the way it is sometimes, Jacky," he said grimly over his shoulder. "All them people over there, hungry and cold and just askin' fer a good, hot meal or a blanket fer the baby . . . and all us folks here, warm and plenty to eat, prayin' to God for new automobiles and dolls and sleds and things." He dropped the rag in the bucket, massaged the cow dry. "Yessir, like you say, Jacky, it ain't fair. Sometimes it seems

like folks here forget all about Jesus bein' born in an old barn." He crossed the alley, changed the machine.

The boy watched him absently. Then he said: "You know what, Pa?"

"What, son?"

"Maybe some little boy in Europe needs a Flexible Flyer more than me, huh?"

"Wouldn't be surprised, Jacky."

"You know what, Pa?"

"What, son?"

"If I was Santa Claus, I wouldn't give me a Flexible Flyer. Or a Paris Comet, even. I'd give it to some little boy in Europe, that's what I'd do!"

The man looked down at his son. He studied the thin, earnest face.

"Would you really, Jacky?"

"I sure would, Pa. And Christmas morning I'd hide in a corner or in the chimney, quiet like a little mouse, and I'd wait for that little boy to find that sled, and I'd be laughin' inside and I'd . . ."

"Jacky," said his father, giving the boy's shoulder a squeeze. "you're all right. Now I tell ya' what—let's you climb up in the mow and throw down some hay, and I'll finish up milkin' and then we'll feed the girls and have all the chores done, and then, when we go up the house, we'll have lots of time to look at the Christmas tree before we go to church. What d'ya say?"

"Okay, Pa." The boy smiled quickly, plodded off toward a ladder in the corner of the barn.

His father watched him go. He quickly uncoupled one of the machines and strode out to the milkroom with it. He set it on the floor, peered sharply out in the barn to make sure Jacky had disappeared up the ladder. Then he went over to a calendar hanging on the wall, tore off the month of December and turned it over. A stub of a pencil hung on a string beside the calendar. He snapped the string off its nail, twisted the pencil out of its loop. In large, backhand letters on the back of the torn sheet he printed: TO JACKY FROM SANTA. With the point of the pencil, he jabbed a hole in the paper, ran the string through the hole. Then, holding both ends of the string, he went out in the barn.

He stopped, looked anxiously toward the corner. A forkful of hay tumbled down through the square hole.

"That enough, Pa?" called a muffled voice.

"No, no, a lot more, Jacky." Quickly Jim Chatfield went over to the maternity pen, opened the gate and stepped in. Big Brown lifted her head, lowered at him suspiciously.

"Ssh!" he whispered. He knelt beside the calf. She regarded him with sleepy indifference. Nervously, he ran the string under her muzzle.



around her neck, knotted it. He stood up, surveyed the effect. The note hung crookedly under her chin like a ridiculous bib.

Jim Chatfield smiled. "Ya little peanut," he murmured. He left the pen, walked rapidly back to the milkroom. He poured the milk slowly through the strainer and listened. He could hear the boy scrambling down the ladder.

He lifted the strainer out of the can, slammed on the lid, called out: "Jacky!"

"Yes, Pa?"

"Throw a coupla forkfuls to Big Brown, will ya?"

"Okay," the boy answered.

Jim Chatfield stood by the cooler. He listened again. He heard the boy mutter to himself, heard the hay swishing along the floor as he dragged it past the mangers toward the pen.

Jim Chatfield reached for his sheepskin.

"Pa! Pa!"

"Be right back, Jacky. Gotta bring the truck around."

Jim Chatfield stepped out into the dawn. The milkroom door slid shut behind him. He stood there a moment, blinking in the gloom. A gust of wind caught him in the face, making his eyes water.

The stars were all gone. He looked toward the East. It was getting lighter now.

NEIL MACCARTHY

# The Darkness of the Renaissance

*A sanctified day hath shone upon us; come ye  
Gentiles and adore the Lord: for this day a great  
light hath descended upon the earth.*

What is this great light which descended upon the earth the first Christmas? It is He "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." This light is the very Word of God, Consubstantial with the Father, filled with the brightness of the Divinity. Great indeed is this light which descended from heaven and illuminated the minds of men. For "no man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." By this Word Who alone has known the Father, is the glory of the Father revealed to the minds of men. In an inspired voice the Church proclaims: "A light shall shine upon us this day, for the Lord is born to us: and He shall be called wonderful, God, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come: of whose reign there shall be no end."

With Christ the Father has given us all things; "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." For it is by Christ that "He hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." For to "as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name."

Having been made partakers of the divine nature, men were empowered to live the very life of God. Thus we have a new principle of knowledge, not merely the light of human reason, but the very Word of God, that Divine Word in which God knows all things. For in Faith this Word is communicated to the soul. By it the human intellect knows God, not merely as He can be known from His creation, but as God knows Himself, a perfection which human nature of itself could never attain.

"But the light shineth in darkness. And the darkness did not comprehend it." What is this "darkness?" Does not the Church pray that "we who have known the mystery of His light may attain the enjoyment of His happiness in heaven"? Why is this light a mystery? A mystery is dark, but here we have a light which is called a mystery. Is not the noon-day sun dark to the eyes of an owl? This divine light is dark to us because its very brilliance blinds our feeble minds. For the human intellect is the weakest of all intellects and is able to bear but a little light. Relative to the light of God it is indeed darkness and that is why the very brightness of this light makes it incomprehensible to us. Hence a man cannot receive this light unless he recognizes this weakness and assents to that which his intellect cannot see, just as a child accepts many things his father teaches him, even though he cannot



comprehend the reasons. We accept the Faith in just that way; for it tells us many things about God in His most intimate life and as yet we cannot see how these things are so. Accordingly, we assent to them solely on the word of our Heavenly Father Who by the impulse of His grace moves our wills to command the intellects' assent. Hence to live a life of Faith, a divine life, a man must die to his natural light. Do not the Saints tell us that we must seek Christ in the darkness of Faith, leaving behind our understanding, memory, imagination—all our natural activity? Is this not to die, for a man to give up his own understanding and live by pure Faith? And did not Our Lord say, “. . . he that will save his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it”? This was what those Pharisees and Sadduces refused to do who came to Our Lord and “asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.” Did they not want a sign that they could understand? They would accept Christ if they did not have to renounce their understanding.

## II

Once this marvelous light had illuminated the earth and shown us a perfection in comparison to which all natural perfection is as nothing; once man had been told of the incomprehensible prodigality of God Who offered to make him His son, to elevate him to a divine life, to give him a participation in God's own knowledge; is it to be thought that men should merely ignore Christ and His promises, should continue to seek a natural perfection as though Christ had not become incarnate? Yet this is the problem with which we are faced in considering modern civilization. We are told that the Renaissance, the beginning of the modern era, was a “return to nature,” an attempt to shake off the “bondage” of Faith. In the light of the Faith is not this account incredible? It is evident that in comparison with the gifts which God has made ours by the Incarnation, the Devil with his shoddy wares is in an unenviable position. (And surely Satan is the only one who could have been the instigator of so terrible a thing as the Renaissance.) What has he to offer that could entice men from God? Is it to be thought that he would use the promise of a merely natural perfection? Perfect as that is, it is but a remote participation in the perfection of the divine life. Natural knowledge is but a shadow of supernatural truth. And even if Satan were such a poor salesman (and how can we think he is when we see the effective methods he has taught modern advertising?) he could not offer men that, for nature correctly understood leads to God, its Author. The Devil is a fool, but he is not stupid. He knew that once men had been raised to a participation in the Divine Word, the first of all lights, they could never be satisfied with merely the light of human reason.

To understand Satan's tactics let us consider the prototype of all temptations: “And the serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die

the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: *and you shall be as gods*, knowing good and evil."

Was not the same promise made at the time of the Renaissance? Were not men persuaded that only by turning from God and His Holy Faith would they attain the perfection of knowledge; that freed from the darkness of Faith, all things would become clear to them? At that time the modern myth of an *infinite* progress in knowledge was born. They thought they were returning to nature, but Aristotle would have blinked at what they called "nature." In the natural order metaphysics is the highest science. Did the Renaissance, then, turn from theology to metaphysics? Everyone knows such was not the case. Rather, the natural sciences, mathematics, history and poetry, became the principal intellectual disciplines and were regarded as the highest knowledge. Why was this? Was it not because these disciplines are most proportioned to our intellects? United to a body, our intellects can best understand the natures of corporeal things. Even metaphysics, a natural discipline, is dark to us because of all natural knowledge it is farthest removed from sense. For that reason Aristotle said that it is more divine than human. (We must remember that God is the principal object of metaphysics.) If a man lives long in a cave his eyes become attuned to the murk around him. Objects in the cave become clear to him while he can barely see the world bathed in sunlight. But is he not mistaken if he then claims that the gloom of the cave is really bright and the sun is dark? In the same way, as long as we are tied to sense, material objects are clearest to us. And the things of God are very hard for us to penetrate. But we are surely foolish if we claim that the things that are clearest to us are really the brightest. For God, on the other hand, Who knows Himself in His Divine Word, it is just the opposite. That which is most intelligible to Him is also the most intelligible in itself. And it will be so for us in beatitude when strengthened by the Light of Glory we shall see God face to face. He Who is the most intelligible being, the source of all light, will be most intelligible to us. God will no longer be dark to us by an excess of brilliance. (It is as though an owl were fitted with a marvelous pair of spectacles through which he could look directly into the sun.) Through Christ we are promised this greatest of all gifts; but we must remember that now we already possess the seed of this life. For St. Thomas tells us that Baptism is a "certain beginning of eternal life." Indeed the Life of Faith and the Life of Glory are essentially one and the same, for in both we know in and by the Divine Word, in the one face to face, in the other "as in a mirror, darkly."

Hence to understand the Renaissance we must understand that that which is most intelligible to a divine light is most intelligible in itself. This is true for God, first of all. But it is potentially so for those



who follow Christ. In beatitude it will be actually so for them. Now do we not see what the men of the Renaissance were really saying (they did not understand it, but Satan who put it into their heads did) when they turned from Faith, and even from metaphysics, the highest wisdom in the natural order, and made those disciplines which are most intelligible to reason the highest knowledge? They actually thought that those things which are most intelligible to reason are the most intelligible in themselves. This doctrine *means* that reason is the divine light. (Rationalism is truly a most unreasonable doctrine.) "And the serpent said to the woman . . . your eyes shall be open: and you shall be as gods."

Do we not begin to see what this celebrated "return to nature" really was? By a master stroke, so he thought (for this greatest of fools never learns that God uses these master strokes for His own purposes), Satan offered men the fruits of Christ without the conditions Christ exacts. Our Lord promised infinite light, but only if we are willing to die to ourselves, to forfeit our natural life. "Unless the seed falling into the ground dieth, it cannot bring forth fruit." Satan is the great flatterer. He does not tell us, as Christ does, that our natural reason is darkness relative to God's light, that if we are to understand God we must renounce our natural understanding. No, he persuades men that they indeed should "be as gods," knowing as God knows, not by denying their natural light but by making it the ultimate light. Similarly, Satan held out to men the infinite freedom which is ours through Christ. But he said that we would gain the "freedom of the sons of God," not by obeying God's laws and dying to our own will, but by negating all law, all discipline. And just as Christ promised that those who would receive Him, by dying to their own will and light, should be made the sons of God: ". . . as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"; so the Devil promised that the true rebirth to a life of infinite perfection would take place only when men renounced the yoke of Christ and were born "of the will of the flesh and the will of man."

### III

St. John tells us that "All things were made by Him (the Word) and without Him was made nothing that was made." But men were so deceived as to think that only by turning from this Word could they attain the knowledge of that nature which is His work. Once such a monstrously perverted doctrine had been accepted, we should hardly expect that men would gain the understanding of nature they desired. We have seen how distorted the knowledge of nature was in the Renaissance; and this initial error is working itself out to its full consequences in our time, characterized as it is by the utter loss of natural truth.

As we know, the Faith is a participation in God's knowledge; St. Thomas says it is a "certain impression of the Divine knowledge in us." Now God is the uncreated light, the source and fount of all secondary lights, such as the light of reason. The while the Renaissance thought it was turning to light, and infinite light at that, it was in fact turning from the first light, from the source of all light. Having done this, it was inevitable that all derived lights would in time be denied. When the tree is cut down the branches wither.

What was begun then is nearing completion for us. On looking at modern doctrine, what strikes us most is the absolute and universal denial of reason, the cultivation of the irrational—even that remnant of reason which the Renaissance preserved is gone. If reason is respected by anyone, we would expect that it would be the philosophers. But John Dewey, the dean of American philosophers, tells us that philosophy has its origin in the imagination. The French philosopher, Bergson, teaches that instinct and intuition give us our only valid knowledge. And this is brought home to us by the American, William James, who remarks that Bergson had freed him from logic, i.e., reason. To choose one other example from many, we have the contemporary cult of Existentialism which derides reason and cherishes the irrational.

Perhaps modern art is more familiar to most of us. One thing is certain, a painting by Picasso is not recognizable as a likeness of anything in nature. It is not clear what it is. Surrealism provides another example. Or again we might consider modern music, which is characterized by excessive dissonance and a lack of any intelligible harmonic resolution. Compare the obscurity and harshness of Stravinsky, Hindemith or Schonberg with the clarity of Mozart. For Mozart consonance was a first principle of music, for the moderns dissonance holds the place. The same manifestations occur in the poetry of today which is proverbially difficult and obscure. What we notice in it is a tendency to formlessness, the lack of an ordered form which is inevitable when the imagination is divorced from reason.

But experimental science is most familiar of all, and indeed is the motivating force behind the manifestations of irrationality in these other fields. Now modern science has one great characteristic: it does not claim to have any absolute and final knowledge (and further says that no other discipline gives us such knowledge). Its conclusions are always subject to change; indeed scientists expect them to be displaced. A scientist would shudder with horror if it were said that any of his knowledge is necessary and unchangeable. Knowledge to him is infinitely perfectible.

The rejection of reason is not the only thing to be noticed in these examples. Do we not observe that the various human faculties are denied the very objects to which they tend by nature? All men desire

to know and to know with certitude. But modern science says that we have no certain knowledge. The ear naturally seeks consonance, but in this modern music it hears only dissonance which is dark to it. For every faculty darkness is substituted for light. This is nothing less than destruction of nature. See what sacrifices Satan asks of those he deludes; he does not ask that they merely mortify their nature but that they annihilate it. And the Renaissance thought that Christ asked for too much.

To understand modern doctrine more precisely we must make use of a somewhat technical point of philosophy, technical but not difficult. St. Thomas tells us that there are two kinds of infinite, one on the part of matter, the other on the part of form. Matter is infinite in the sense that it is able to be determined, informed by many different forms. Of itself it has no form but it can receive the form of animality, humanity and even non-living forms such as a rock, etc. When it is determined by any one form it becomes finite, i.e., it combines with the form to become a determinate kind of thing. But matter considered in itself, not united to a form, and it is in virtue of its form that we know it. **Form, too, is infinite** inasmuch as concrete is capable of being made into many things, of receiving many different forms. It can become a house, a burial vault, a church, a statue, etc. Now since we can only know by forms, matter as destitute of form is absolutely unintelligible. We can only know it as it is, united to a form, and it is in virtue of its form that we know it. Form, too, is infinite, for of itself it is common to many things. But it is made finite by being received in matter, i.e., it becomes the form of this particular thing.

Matter is an infinite which is lacking in all perfection; accordingly, when it is determined to become some one thing it receives a perfection. Form, on the other hand, is not perfected when joined to matter, but rather it is limited. Therefore, form which is infinite because not limited by matter is an infinite of perfection. St. Thomas goes on to say that God is a self-subsisting form, that the form of the Divinity is not received into any matter (or any potency of any kind) and so is not limited, made finite. Hence, God as infinite and unlimited cannot be grasped by a finite intellect. This is why God is unintelligible and dark to us. Matter too, as infinite, is unintelligible to us, not as in God's case because it is too intelligible, but because it simply lacks all intelligibility. To sum up: there are two infinities, God and matter; one is infinite because of its perfection, the other because of its imperfection. Both are unintelligible to us; God, Who is most intelligible in Himself, because of an excess of intelligibility; matter because it is intrinsically and essentially unintelligible.

Now anyone familiar with modern thought knows that the one thing universally agreed on is that there are no forms (essences) such



as we have described. The moderns use the term "form" but by it they mean *material structure*. For example, all would deny that there is such a thing as human nature, in the sense of an essence which is present in all men, as is presupposed when we say that Christ redeemed man. Now we can understand why men of science tell us that they have no absolute and unchanging knowledge. When science is reduced to the investigation of matter (material structure) divorced from form, it can give us no certain knowledge, for the object known is indeterminate and changing. Consequently, knowledge of it cannot be eternally true, but is as undetermined as its object. But it is this denial of form which makes the object of knowledge a quasi-infinite object, which makes it unintelligible and inexhaustible as an object of contemplation. And because the object known is formless and dark it is impossible to have any literal, determinate knowledge. But in every instance the fact that our knowledge is unclear and inadequate to express the fullness of the infinite object is used to insinuate that this is necessarily so because of the inexhaustible profundity of the object. For example, contemporary literary criticism insists that what a poem says can never be fully expressed in a literal paraphrase. And they are right in this, but not, as they intimate, because the poem's meaning is too profound to be expressed, nor because it gives us a truth above logic, as they frequently say. Rather it is because a poem is a material (sensible) image and thus as material is intrinsically lacking in intelligibility. Historical scholarship gives us another illustration of this pursuit of the infinite of matter. In our time scholarship has become a search for an endless number of facts; material facts as such, not as illuminated and made intelligible by rational principles. Indeed, any attempt to interpret or explain the facts in the light of abstract principles is frowned upon as departing from scholarly objectivity. Once again we have this quasi-mystical contemplation of a material and therefore inexhaustible object.

What are we to make of all this? Can we conclude that modern man has ceased to be a rational animal? We would deny our own principles if we said that. Man is rational by nature and that means he has to have reasons for what he does. Even lunatics are most ingenious in finding reasons for their aberrations (bad reasons it is true, but still reasons). The human mind cannot seek darkness as an end in itself; in virtue of our rational nature we must necessarily seek light. Is this not true for those who embrace the darkness of Faith? They know that through this darkness they will attain the eternal and uncreated light. Does this not tell us why the moderns embrace the darkness of matter? why they seek the irrational and unintelligible? In truth it is only by seeking darkness that we shall ever see the Infinite Being. But are not the moderns also seeking the infinite? Is not that why they devote themselves to the investigation of matter? Let us not be so blind as to accuse

hem of seeking darkness and unintelligibility for its own sake. We should remember that it was with the promise of infinite knowledge that the Devil lured men from Christ, infinite knowledge without paying the price of darkness. He told them that their intellects could comprehend all things. This he could only do because Christ had promised men that through Him they would know as God knows. But as Satan knew, men must inevitably fail in this blasphemous undertaking and we today are the witnesses of the frustration of the lie that was the Renaissance. But men are still seeking infinite light, for after Christ, after the great light which this day hath descended upon the earth, they could be satisfied with nothing less. But being unwilling to seek it in darkness, they sought it without Christ. See to what a depth of degradation it has led them! They have inevitably lost, not only supernatural truth, but even every natural good, the very nature to which they so triumphantly "returned"; see how terribly the Devil tricks those whom he deludes, for now they are seeking this infinite light in darkness, an infinitely greater darkness than Christ asks, for this darkness destroys nature. Is it not clear to the eyes of Faith that in seeking the infinite of matter, in running after the unintelligible and irrational, by a horrible diabolical delusion men are seeking Satan, not Satan for his own sake, but Satan masked as Christ? This should not surprise us. St. Paul told us that our struggle "is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the powers of darkness in high places."

Do we not see how abundantly Our Lord's words have been fulfilled: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." For since His coming men have been unable not to seek Him. How wonderfully it manifests His Divine power when we realize that even Satan must imitate Christ if he is to attract men. But even more, seeing the diabolical origin of the errors around us, we must realize that "this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting."

Our Lord said: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Does not history verify this abundantly? Let us learn well that since the coming of Christ, the "light of the world," we can no longer live merely a natural life. Either we will embrace the Divine Word in the darkness of Faith, desiring *only* that Word and all else for His sake, or we will embrace the darkness of the light with which Lucifer will destroy us. For he that does not follow Christ, the eternal light, Who has come into the world to be our light that we might know the Father, "walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth."

WILLIAM DAVEY, T.O.P.

# The Light in the Darkness

*Oh God, Who hast made this most holy night to shine forth with the brightness of the true light, grant that we may enjoy His happiness in heaven, the mystery of Whose light we have known on earth.*

—Collect from first Mass of Nativity

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It was in the midst of darkness, symbolical of that which darkens the soul, that Jesus was born. It is at the moment when the sun has reached the lowest point of its course, and is re-born again that the "Sun of Suns" is born each year at Christmas. The sun of nature and the Sun of Souls appear together.

It is this important message that the Church wishes to impress on us during the Christmas season. Yet most of us fail to understand the real significance of the Christmas story. It is essentially a festival of lights, symbolic of the Light of the World. We have retained some semblance of the symbolism in the Christmas tree lights and the lights in windows; but we do it only because it has always been done, and we are ignorant of the real meaning of it all.

Christmas is, therefore, a season of light. Christmas ceremonies throughout the world over evolve around lights and fires—burning candles, blazing logs, illuminated trees. The lights on our Christmas trees and in our windows have a significance. It is well for us to remember that.

The use of the symbolism of light did not originate with the Church. Like most of the other Christian customs it has been part of the folklore of mankind since the days of the cave-dwellers. The feast of Christmas at mid-winter coincides with a feast the pagans celebrated at the mid-winter solstice in honor of the birth of the sun, which they worshipped. The association of light with the darkness of mid-winter has been a religious tradition all through the ages and in all great religions. The Jewish calendar marks at mid-winter the feast of Channukah in honor of the capture of Jerusalem by the Maccabees. Prayers are said in the synagogues at sunrise and sunset, and in the homes a taper is lit every night, until by the eighth night eight candles are burning in token of ever-increasing strength.

The Holy Family was a pious one, and like all good Jews lived liturgically. So today, all good orthodox Jews live liturgically. To live



so means to live the life of the Church in every phase of life. Our work, our play, our study, our meditation should always be directed to the honor and glory of God, to the Blessed Trinity, the Blessed Virgin and the saints and martyrs. The Christian way of life is the liturgical way of life.

Because we no longer live liturgically is, without doubt, the reason why the celebration of Christmas has in our time no apparent connection with the birth of Christ. Advent slips by unnoticed by most of us; we live through the season in a welter of confusion, of crowded streets and shops, in worry over Bill's size in socks, or whether Gladys would prefer the pink silk negligee, or the perfume that the salesgirl assured us would surround her with the lure of a movie queen; we spend anxious moments wondering whether Aunt Sue will like the embroidered piano scarf that was left over from last year, and if it is possible to get anything decent at all for Aunt Minnie for less than a dollar and a half; and on the Holy Eve itself as we hear the old traditional carols being chanted and while the priest reads to us once more the age-old story of the birth of the Christ Child in the manger our thoughts are on the carefully wrapped packages under the tree, and whether Junior will really care for the electric train that cost the better part of a week's salary. We have heard the Christmas story year after year and it means nothing to us; we listen and we do not heed. We go on about our business, feverishly attending to a hundred inconsequential details and heaving a sigh of relief when it is all over.

It is often said, repeated over and over each year: "Why can't the Christmas spirit last throughout the year?" It cannot last and never will last longer than three days, simply because it is not the true Christmas spirit. The glow of comradeship, of tolerance, of benevolence, is produced by the suggestions of festivity surrounding us at every turn: the crowded streets, the holly and mistletoe that transform the drabness of business quarters, the gaudily decorated shop windows, the carol singers that greet us in department stores and public buildings, and the constant repetition of that grossly misquoted chorus of the angelic choir, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

That misquotation is the key to the whole sorry affair of a modern Christmas. We have lost the true meaning of the day. The Christmas spirit is more likely to come out of a bottle than from the heart. The angels promised, on that first Christmas, "Peace to men of good will." But there is little good will abroad these days. Rather we are confronted with a sentimental longing for a brotherhood of man. But brothers must have a father and a family must have a head. There can be no family of nations until there is a father of all nations, yet we will not

accept this. Each year the Church observes the birthday of the Father of Nations and we do not accept Him. We talk about Him, we know His story, we give Him lip service, but we refuse to bow down and accept His laws; we refuse to give Him even the ordinary respect that we give our earthly father.

It was not haphazardly that the early Fathers of the Church arranged the yearly liturgy. It was with a sense of timing, a dramatic instinct which caused them to draw on the accumulated mystical experience of man and incorporate it into the Church's devotional chronology. Jewish symbolism and pagan imagery suited the purpose of the early disciples exactly; to dramatize the sources of life, the phenomena of nature, and through these visible signs the better to illustrate to their flocks the hidden meanings of the life of the Church and of Christ and the mysteries of the Redemption. The early Fathers were poets and artists, musicians and mystics, and their combined genius, guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, created the magnificent fabric of Catholic culture into which are embedded the precious jewels of the Mass and the Sacraments. Woven around these priceless treasures are the canonical hours which sanctify each hour of the day and night, chants and prayers, the prismatic thread of seasonal colors and the intricate designs symbolic of the cycle of nature: the equinox, mid-summer and mid-winter, the harvest and the sowing.

The brightest symbol of all is the Christmas one. The story of the birth of the Light of the World is told to the world by the flickering light of the candle, the emblem of the frail Child who brought with Him into the dark world the promise of a brighter future and Whose light spread over the earth in a blaze of glory. It is on this lesson that we should meditate at Christmas; not on gifts, parties, trees. Christmas is a home festival, unlike other Catholic feasts which are community affairs. The family attend Mass together, sing carols and pray around the crib. It is an ancient Christmas tradition that every home should have a crib, but we have forgotten that now. Even when there is a crib in the house it is very often dwarfed by the Christmas tree and the pile of gifts. It might be better from the spiritual point of view to dispense with Christmas presents altogether (although if this were carried to its logical conclusion a "recession" might result). There are days set aside especially for the exchange of gifts: Epiphany, for example, when friends exchange money, fruit or sweets in imitation of the Three Wise Men from the East; or the feast of the original Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, December 6, which is the day set apart for the children when they are honored with gifts and special entertainment; or New Year's Day which always has been the time for gifts to employees and public servants.



The mediaeval Christian, and the Catholic peasant today, continued into their homes the symbolic observances of Christmas. There was no need for anyone to go out on Christmas Day. Carols were sung around the crib, the story of the search of Mary and Joseph for room at the inn was told in little plays or charades accompanied by traditional chants and dialogue. The candles were lit with great care and the Yule log was set ablaze with much ceremony and blessings. Life at home midst a Catholic family could be one of constant joy and interest. It should be shocking to a Catholic to see the long lines of children before a movie house on Christmas Day, of all days.

The feast of the Epiphany, which the Irish call "Little Christmas," is also a day of interesting customs. The exchange of gifts to represent gold, frankincense and myrrh; the Twelfth Night cake which is divided among the family and guests to signify that to each goes the portion of the Lord, and into which is baked a coin. He who receives the coin is Twelfth Night King and reigns over the household and is given special privileges on that day, symbolic of the royalty of the Magi. It is in homely festivities of this sort that the life of the Church enters our homes.

In our times when the world is under the pall of misery, destruction and hunger, the symbol of the Child Jesus, the Light of the World, has tremendous significance. We have woefully neglected the symbols of the Church, sign posts along the Christian Way. Christmas will reveal its meaning to us when we concentrate on the Church's customs and do not dissipate our energy in frantic last-minute shopping, expensive gifts, huge Christmas trees. There is more hope for the world in the symbol of a flickering candle than in all the deliberations of the United Nations.

LEONARD AUSTIN



**"TAKE ROME! THERE'S A TOWN F  
THINGS ARE GOING ON THERE ALL THE TIME"**





**CULTURE, BEAUTY AND BIG MONEY:  
CAN'T WIN IN THIS TOWN!"**

# The Family Feast

"Are you going away for Christmas?" asked the massive blonde as she covered her typewriter.

"What, all of us? You'd want Noah's Ark!" replied the junior as she applied the first lipstick she had ever owned with a fine, slashing technique. "My married sister and her kids are coming, and my friend and her baby and the woman next door and Peter's girl because she lives in digs and can't get home and . . ."

"A real old-fashioned Christmas," remarked the massive blonde. "Well, you can have one where there's kids, can't you? I always think Christmas is nothing without . . ."

"What are you doing, Grace?" asked the willowy brunette.

The massive blonde turned round. "Oh, just as usual. Stew in my own juice. Mum likes to be just ourselves on Christmas day. You always go away, don't you?" There was a suggestion of envy in her voice.

"We're going to Bournemouth to my uncle's hotel. We had a lovely time last year—there was an R. A. F. Station near, but it won't be there now. Still it's better than just sticking at home nowadays. You can't get anything now."

"We've got a turkey my sister won in a raffle at her office," said the massive blonde, "but we couldn't get any drinks."

"We got a parcel from America, from the G. I. that was fond of my sister," said the junior, "so we got a simply swell cake and nylon. Just like pre-war. Are you going home, Ursula?"

"Home's my flat," replied the girl in glasses.

"Your people, then?"

"I haven't any, only aunts and uncles, and they haven't got room. I suppose. They all live in the country."

"I thought you went to friends," said the massive blonde.

"Sometimes. I think they think I go to relations and my relations think I go to friends."

"Why don't you ask some lonely person to spend it with you?" suggested the massive blonde helpfully.

"I tried to, but they all had somewhere to go."

"Still, it doesn't seem right to be by yourself—Christmas is a family feast, though to be sure no one can have a decent Christmas now."

"And I haven't got a family!"

"Well, after all," said the willowy brunette brightly but tactlessly, "you wouldn't want to go where you felt you were an outsider, would you?"

"God forbid!" exclaimed the girl in glasses with energy. "I prefer my own company."

"Scrooge!" said the junior, who had not long left school.

"I've a good deal of sympathy with Scrooge," continued the girl in glasses, as she packed up her belongings quickly and ran off, hoping no one had seen that her eyes were wet.

She heard that they did not start talking again immediately she left the room. They would probably say she was getting on, after all, and it was sad, but they always thought people brought it on themselves, and she was thirty-eight. She made her way through the crowds in Trafalgar Square, and while she waited in the queue, tried to pull herself together and failed.

Christmas was more unbearable every year. Before the war her mother had been alive and her sister in England. Now her sister had married an Australian and gone to join him. During the war she had worked in a government office directly concerned with the war effort, and as someone had had to work over the holiday she had volunteered to do so after her mother's death, and taken someone else's fire-watching duty in the evening. Last year the war was over and she had hoped someone would remember she lived alone, but none did, or if they did it was only to add that they would simply *love* to have had her but . . . (her mother is ill, or my sister's having a baby, or my brother's been debilitated that week, or nothing decent to eat, as you know and so on). She had finally rung up everyone she could think of, wishing them a happy Christmas and hoping . . . it was always the same, with a postscript that after all no one could have a decent Christmas now. It was not the dinner she wanted. She would have brought her own meat and eaten it there rather than feel left out. She had rooted out all the lonely people she knew, but they all had friends they went to. She seemed to be the only lonely person in London. At the last minute a girl friend, shocked at the thought of her spending a lonely Christmas, had cut off her own friends, to whom she always went, in order to spend it with her, a kindness which Ursula never forgot. But this year the girl friend was in Germany with the Control Commission.

If only she could bring herself not to mind being left out. She had no objection to her own company all the rest of the year, but at Christmas it was different.

The next day was Christmas Eve, and she went shopping. So did everyone else, and she spent most of the morning in queues of various lengths at the butcher, the greengrocer, the tobacconist and the baker. Somehow the shops and stalls had managed to decorate themselves reasonably with home-made paper chains. Children were spending the money they had exacted for singing two verses of "While shepherds watched . . ." through the letter boxes and were getting in everyone's



way. She caught scraps of talk in the shops and queues: "Just ourselves, you know . . ." "So we shall have drinks anyway . . ." "But it doesn't matter about the food really—if you've got kids they enjoy anything . . ." To think—they've never known a real Christmas—I mean, pre-war. Poor little things." The poor little things did not seem unduly depressed, but still got under everyone's feet. She felt she would never enjoy another Christmas as long as she lived. She would never be able to forget that someone, somewhere, was being left out, because it was the family feast and he or she did not belong to anyone's family. For that was what it had come to mean—the feast when outsiders were shut out, not the feast when strangers were brought in, as they once had been. She tried to remind herself that the Holy Family had been shut out too, but did not find much comfort in the thought. If only they would let her forget that it was Christmas she would not feel so bad.

The queue at the confectioner's was so long she could not face it and stood for some time in one for oranges, but the supply ran out before her turn came. Still, she had a pretty good load, one way or another. One year she had lost her ration book and could not get an emergency one because the Food Office shut on Christmas Eve. She had been faced with a Christmas dinner of vegetables and last year bottled plums, but fortunately the grocer produced a tin of Spiced Apples quietly and with an air of great secrecy when no one was looking.

In the afternoon she went to a cinema to kill time, and take her mind off herself, and when she came home she got herself a meal, though too late because of Midnight Mass. Next door they were throwing a party, a wildly hilarious one, with the help of a cracked piano and a great deal of song. Few things are more depressing than listening to someone else's party. Children were singing carols in the street.

At eleven she set out, in good time to be sure of a seat, with her small New Testament in her pocket to read till Mass began. She arrived at the Cathedral and it was nearly empty. The people drifted in in twos and threes, shapeless and impersonal in the vast gloom. Few of the lights were yet lit, and she found it impossible to read the small print in her New Testament, so she let her mind wander instead. Dim figures came in, genuflected and took their places, filling up the vast, unfinished building. The high arches of uncovered brick seemed to loom at themselves in a faint haze.

The Cathedral filled slowly. The people passed up and down the aisles looking for places. They pressed into the aisles, now that there were no seats left, and filled the chapels and leaned against the great square piers. The sanctuary lights were turned on and the organ began to play, filling the building with great billows of sound. It did not matter that one was alone.

At twelve o'clock the Mass began. The ancient ritual, the solemn Latin, led right back into the past. She was with the Christians who had been present at the same mystery in the low chambers, crudely but vividly painted with Christian symbols (the fish and the loaves, the Nativity, Saint Peter and Saint Paul) hollowed out of the ground under some of the tombs of their fathers. She was with Agnes and Cecily, Cosmas and Damien, John and Paul—friendly names from a vanished world, a world in which Virgil was a modern poet and his tongue the common speech, a yet unfallen Rome before Monica and Augustine were born or thought of. But they had been present too, and Francis and the English martyrs of Elizabeth's reign who said Mass secretly in garrets and cellars and were put to death for it. What a little thing time was. A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday . . .

The Mass was over now. In the Cathedral great clouds of sound from the organ rolled up into the dark arches while a priest said the second Mass and a few people stayed on. The rest of the congregation hurried home through the bitter, empty streets.

Once home Ursula heated some cocoa and drank it while she dressed quickly. Then she got into bed and turned off the light. Everything was quiet now, quiet and dark.

The next day she got up late and ate a leisurely breakfast by the fire. She had opened her few presents as they had arrived during the week. Out in the street some children were running up and down and shouting, and, indoors, mothers and elder sisters began to be very busy.

She went to High Mass at the little parish church across the way. It was filled with families with young children mostly, who had not been able to go to Midnight Mass. Many of them were wearing gaudy new head scarves, bright gloves and gay buttonholes pinned to shabby coats, which were obviously Christmas presents; and the child in front had a new doll to keep her quiet. The row of children in front of her, inadequately controlled by their father, fidgeted and whispered. The priest gave a short address in which he admonished them to remember the significance of the feast while they enjoyed themselves with their families, and hoped they would have a very happy Christmas.

After Mass all the children fell over each other to get out first, and pranced up and down in the street outside bragging about their presents, and mothers and elder sisters hurried home, those of them that were not home already, to get dinner.

Ursula went back to her flat and cooked her steak and sprouts and warmed up the mince pie, and after the plates were cleared away she settled down with a book by the fire. It was very cosy and peaceful, once you could shut the world out and forget what you had not got, and no one could remind you of it.

In the afternoon she went for a long walk along by the river far as Battersea Park. Fathers were taking their offspring for a walk and she remembered a game they had used to play on Christmas afternoons of counting up the number of obviously new ties to see who could get the highest score. In the evening she went to the ballet. It had been a tolerably pleasant holiday.

\* \* \*

"Did you have a nice Christmas?" asked the massive blonde next morning.

"Very nice, thank you. Did you?"

"Middling. Go anywhere?"

"No. Just pottered about at home."

"So did we. You can't have a proper Christmas now, with no drinks and rationing, can you? Did you have a nice Christmas, Peggy?"

The willowy brunette drifted in looking the worse for wear, lugging a heavy suitcase. She sat down with a groan.

"Swell, thanks," she said faintly, and began to make up her face.

"Hullo, Ursula," cried the junior, bursting in with her coat hanging open and her hair all over the place. "Did you go anywhere after all?"

"No. I stayed at home."

"Oh, what a shame. You ought to have come to us. I told Mum you lived alone and she scolded me for not asking you. I wish I knew."

"Thank you very much, dear. You're a lamb, but you know, I was quite happy."

"Still," said the junior, "it doesn't seem right being alone at Christmas."

"Oh, it isn't so bad, when you don't fret over what you haven't got."

"Yes, but Ursula, *Christmas!* It isn't right—you ought to enjoy yourself. It's the whole *point* of it."

"But I did enjoy myself. I was quite happy."

"But I don't mean that. You ought to have *fun*."

"She likes being alone," said the willowy brunette. "Don't you, Ursula?"

"Well, all I can say is you *ought* to of," said the junior with emphasis. "It's all wrong."

"After all," said the massive blonde comfortably, "it wouldn't be so if we were all alike, would it?"

"No, I suppose not," said the junior doubtfully, "but after all—still I'm glad it wasn't so bad after all."

What a nice little thing she is, thought Ursula, as she waited for a bus at the end of the day. So natural and so thoughtless and so kind.



she could not explain that she also had been with her family—with Agnes and Cecily, John and Paul.

And yet in spite of this it had not been like Christmas at all. The prior was quite right. Ursula had been happy because, except when she was at Mass, she had been able to forget it was Christmas. But Christmas was not intended to be kept as a purely religious feast any more than it was meant to be a secular one. Either way of keeping it was perversion. It was, as everyone said without thinking, the family feast, and celebrated the coming of God into the human family. It should rightly be celebrated by family merry-makers as well as by prayer and praise, though perhaps not in the somewhat exclusive manner of some good families. And those who had no families must find them. Not only at Christmas but all the rest of the year. Such a self-contained life was not right or natural, and it was well to be reminded of it. But she had become thus detached because, at one time or another, she had been hurt by human contacts, and had severed herself from them. Now she was hurt by having none, and it hurt even when she could school herself to believe that she did not need them. Just once in the year she had all the concentrated pain which for most people is spread over the four seasons. The world had strayed far from the old Catholic Christmas, and had broken it up into little bits, as it had broken up the Faith into little bits. But the remedy would hardly be applied in either case by pretending not to see what was there.

C. M. LARKINS  
London, England

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### KRIS GIMBEL'S

Christian customs, business men  
Are seldom loathe to forfeit,  
But cling they will to Santa Claus  
Who brings a handsome profit.



## 'Twas the Day Before Christmas

The Church of St. Efficientias rose magnificently in the midst of an entire city block. Its beauty was enhanced in the summer by the vastness of the cool, green grass that surrounded it; in the winter by the whiteness of the untouched snow. Even brash Protestants and unbelievers dared not take liberties with the Monsignor's lawn—not that he was a fearsome person, but because he had so skilfully blocked the natural shortcuts with small hedges and short fences so that they never really got started. Even the small boys, making "angels" in the snow in the neighborhood, seemed to shy away from destroying the pristine beauty of the huge expanse of whiteness that surrounded the church on this 24th day of December, 1947.

The Monsignor was justly proud of his church. When he came to St. Efficientias, the parish plant had been in deplorable condition. With characteristic thoroughness and forethought, he had planned the remaking of the parish buildings, the church, the rectory, and the school.

And now, twenty years later, he could look with pride, and justly so, upon a magnificent church, a convenient rectory, and a well equipped school. It had not been easy, and had required the utmost cooperation of the entire parish. The Monsignor had been fortunate in securing a devoted corps of laymen, all experienced, successful businessmen, who worked with him and helped organize his campaigns. As a result of their cooperation and the Monsignor's hard work, he now had a parish entirely free of debt.

At precisely 7:13 A.M. this day before Christmas, the Monsignor stepped out of the side door of the church. He had just finished the 6:30 Mass, and he pulled his overcoat tighter around his spare, thin body. But

en swathed in the overcoat, and huddled against the force of the cold wind, he still had an air about him as he walked down the steps. He rode quickly along the clean-swept walk, wide enough so parishioners hurrying to late Sunday Mass had ample room to pass one another without encroaching on the lawn, but also protected with a fence, small enough to be inconspicuous, but large enough to present an obstacle to edge hopping. He paused at the street, carefully looking each way, before crossing to the rectory. His routine was the same, day in and day out, winter, summer, spring or fall. His housekeeper knew the moment his footsteps would sound on the porch, the moment his breakfast would be on the dining room table, almost the second he would bow his gray head to say grace, for the Monsignor valued his minutes. He knew that time was valuable, and he did not propose to waste it.

At precisely 8:00 A.M. he was seated in his office, laying his plans for the day. He knew that soon the first assistant would come hurrying through the hall, having finished the 7:30 Mass; and moments later the second assistant would hurry through the same hall, not late but hurrying so that he would be ready to leave the sacristy when the electric clock there stood at ten seconds before 8:15. The Monsignor rejoiced in the evenness of life in the parish, the smoothness with which it ran, the effortless routine by which the different activities, the different parts of it fitted together.

He permitted himself the luxury of reminiscence this morning. He knew his plans for the day, and the assistants knew what their tasks would be. He had learned the value of scheduling, preparing, planning the day's work when his laymen's committee conducted their first campaign. They had made, from the census cards, a list of every wage earner in the parish. Then they had gone down the list, and set an amount for each. He had been amazed at how much they knew of the finances of each parishioner, and still more amazed at how right their estimates had been. It had made a tremendous impression on the Monsignor.

This was the day before Christmas. There would be Confessions in the morning and in the afternoon. The words he had used in last Sunday's sermon ran through his mind:

"There will be Confessions in the evening of the 23rd of December from seven-thirty until nine. On the day before Christmas there will be Confessions in the morning from ten until eleven-thirty, and in the afternoon from two-thirty until finished. We hope that Confessions may be finished by five o'clock. This should be possible if everyone will cooperate, and I know that the loyal parishioners of St. Efficientias will. Your priests, just as you yourselves do, would like to have Christmas be free."

He remembered the first time he stopped Confessions on Christmas



Eve. You would have thought it was a heresy. It almost seemed though some of his parishioners wanted to be in the state of grace the shortest possible time before receiving Communion at the Midnight Mass. But it was ridiculous for himself and his assistants to be in confessional Christmas Eve, with little or no chance to rest before Midnight Mass. Now the change was accepted, just as was the fact - Confessions were not heard before Mass on Sundays. That was old-world custom; there was no reason why it should be continued. He had resorted to strategy in removing that obstacle to the smooth running of his parish. He had merely announced that anyone wishing to go to Confession before Mass could notify one of the ushers, who would lead the priest in the sacristy.

The Monsignor felt rather satisfied with his work for the past year. The total number of Communions distributed would be more than any other year. The financial report would also be better. He finally felt that he had the parish organized properly so that it would almost run itself, even if he were not at the controls. It had not been easy, of course, and there had been much opposition at first, and even some assistants had to be transferred.

The one who had caused the most trouble was Father Stanislaus, who for five years now had been pastor of the little Polish church on the other side of the city, in the coal dock and gas plant district. Father Stanislaus could never realize that as order was the law of the university, it should also be the law of the parish. He had objected to almost everything the Monsignor planned, sometimes vehemently, sometimes mildly and humorously, as though objecting with the realization that no change would be made in the plans.

Father Stanislaus had not liked the new accounting system, the Monsignor recalled, even though the Monsignor's public accountant friend had installed it without charge. The accountant had spent much time preparing the proper forms and books to cover what he considered the accounting needs of the parish, and when he had finished, declared that anyone could keep the records without difficulty.

He had made a mistake there, though, because Father Stanislaus couldn't. Or maybe he hadn't wanted to. Yet he was always willing to always anxious to work hard, and the Monsignor had thought that he could learn. But Father Stanislaus had not been anxious to learn the keeping of such records, even simple records. The Monsignor's accountant friend had spent considerable time trying to explain the records and forms to Father Stanislaus. Finally he had complained to the Monsignor. "It's no use, Monsignor," he said. "Father Stanislaus doesn't care, for instance, how much you spend for meals in the rectory. He sees no need for comparative cost figures to show the relative cost of a certain commodity this year as against last year."

And Father Stanislaus thought that most amusing, and laughed heartily. "What does it matter," he asked, "how much we spend for food on Friday? If it was less last year, perhaps someone gave us a catch of fish; perhaps the cost was less; perhaps we ate eggs instead, or maybe it was St. Patrick's Day. But anyway, what does it matter? These are the trivial things that fill our lives and detract from our main purpose in life." And then Father Stanislaus went off to play golf with a Baptist boy who was in love with a Catholic girl, but who thought priests were bogeymen.

It had been easier with Father Stanislaus gone. He seemed to stir up the other assistants a bit—not deliberately, but by his complete disregard of what he considered irrelevant. He wasn't disobedient; he just didn't consider such things very important, and refused to take them seriously.

And partly because of Father Stanislaus, the Monsignor had waited until his transfer before putting into effect his schedule of office hours. It was accepted now, without question. Every Sunday the Monsignor's bulletin carried at the foot of the page the hours for Baptism, Confession, and office hours at the rectory. The Monsignor had very carefully explained at all the Masses when he first listed the office hours that of course the priests of St. Efficientias were always available for sick calls, at any hour of the day or night. He wanted to be sure there was no misunderstanding about that, but, as he told the parishioners, "... every businessman must have office hours; otherwise he is not using his time to the utmost. That is our only purpose in setting such hours as these. Of course, we will always be available in the evenings by appointment." He was sure the parishioners had understood the reasons behind it; at any rate, he knew that they had now accepted the change.

\* \* \*

On the other side of the city, the Church of St. Pastorius poked its wild cross into the sky from a small hill among the houses of the coal dock workers, and within range of the gas plant. It was not an elaborate structure—it had originally been a Methodist church, but Father Stanislaus had made it as attractive as he could. Some purists objected to it as garish; they complained about the decorations in the church, the multitude of electric lights, the gaudy statues, about the huge statue of Christ alongside the church, with a spotlight playing on it. They didn't know, of course, that the men on the coal docks along the river could see it while they worked the long winter nights, and that it gave them strength and courage, and occasionally routed temptation when their glance happened that way.

Father Stanislaus' lawn was as green in summer as the Monsignor's; there was just not so much of it. The church, the rectory and the

school were crowded into a quarter of a city block, and there was much space left for lawn. In winter he had more snow than the Mayor's signor, and the wind piled it high around the church and school rectory. It was not as clean; Father had the bad habit of encouraging the children to play around the rectory and school, and some of them inevitably strayed into the churchyard.

His day, on this 24th day of December, 1947, began too early. About four o'clock in the morning, there was a banging on his door. Hurrying down the stairs, Father Stanislaus stumbled through the accumulation of baseballs, bats, and footballs that still cluttered his hallway and switched on the porch light as he opened the door.

"Father," said the taxi driver on the porch, "Joe Hulobowicz is in the cab, dead drunk. I took him home and his wife won't let him into the house. What'll I do with him?"

Father Stanislaus shook his head. "Poor Joe—and poor Mary and the children. Is he very drunk?"

"Dead drunk, Father," said the taxi driver. "They got their boozing tonight, and it was too much for Joe."

"Wait here," said Father. "I'll go with you back to his house."

He raced back upstairs to dress, and returned in a few minutes.

At the Hulobowicz house there was a light in the kitchen window, and Father Stanislaus went around to the back. Through the window he could see Mary Hulobowicz, her head on the table, either asleep or sobbing quietly, so as not to wake the children.

When he knocked, she jumped. "It's Father, Mary," he called.

She opened the door and he stepped inside. "Joe's outside in a cab," he said.

"He can't come in," she said, almost hysterically. "This is the last time, Father. If he can't keep away from whiskey on Christmas Eve . . ."

"Mary," said Father Stanislaus slowly, "Joe has his weakness—and I have my weakness, and you have your weakness. That's our human nature, but Joe doesn't fight against his. Tell Joe I want to see him before Confession this afternoon. I'll get him straightened out, Mary."

She wavered, then nodded her head in agreement.

"I'll bring him in," said Father Stanislaus; "you get a bed ready for him."

He went out the back door again, and with the help of the taxi driver lifted Joe Hulobowicz out of the cab. While the driver was slamming shut the door, he dropped two folded bills into Joe's pocket. He knew Joe's drinking habits—until he ran out of money—and he did not want to see the Hulobowicz family penniless on Christmas Eve—and the coal company could wait. They were accustomed to that by now.



Back in his rectory, he wearily climbed the stairs for a few hours before his day began in earnest. His daily Mass was at eight o'clock, and as usual he was late for it—and the lateness ran into everything he did during the day. His afternoon Confessions were scheduled to begin at three o'clock; but it was three-fifteen before he appeared. Joe had come around, and Father Stanislaus had straightened him out; and after that Father had telephoned some of the tavern keepers to make sure that Joe stayed straightened, at least for a while. His afternoon Confessions were supposed to end at five, but there were still twenty to be heard at five, and with others coming in it was six-fifteen before he finished and had a chance for a bite to eat.

At six-thirty the Baptist boy of five years before, who was in love with a Catholic girl, but who had thought priests were bogeymen, called with his first-born and his wife, to pay his Christmas respects to the priest who had converted him. Father Stanislaus played with the little girl for most of the time the couple were there, for he loved all people and most of all he loved children. They started to hurry off, knowing he had many waiting for Confession, but he stopped them for a minute and left the room. He came back with a hand behind his back and gave the little girl a stick of peppermint candy, and then another and another and another, until her hands were so full she could hold no more, and still he gave her more and more. And he laughed with child-like delight at her happiness and joyful bewilderment in trying to hold all the candy and yet take the new sticks that were being offered her.

After they had gone, he went back to the confessional again. He knew from experience there would be many coming to Confession that night. Some parishioners rather bitterly referred to it as the overflow from St. Efficientias, but Father Stanislaus would have resented that. A priest is a pastor of souls, and every lost soul, every soul in a state of sin, a lost sheep, to be brought back to the fold.

He had a little respite between the late comers for Confession and the early comers for the Midnight Mass, and in the quiet solitude of the church, in the company of God, he read his breviary, switching off the light above him in the confessional whenever the outside door opened, patiently awaiting the God-given privilege of restoring another human soul to God's grace.

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At the Midnight Mass, both the Church of St. Efficientias and the church of St. Pastorius were crowded. In the former, as the electric clock in the sacristy showed ten seconds before the time of the Mass, the two altar boys left the sacristy, followed by the second assistant who was Deacon of the Mass, followed by the first assistant who was Master of Ceremonies of the Mass, followed by the Monsignor who was

Celebrant of the Mass. And the bell tinkled on the second of midnight. The well trained altar boys, their faces shiny bright, every hair in place, performed with the usual precision of the Monsignor's altar boys at the front of the church, where they could more closely follow the Monsignor. Fur-coated women and a few well dressed men opened their St. Andrew's Missals to the Mass of the Catechumens and knelt as the Monsignor began the prayers at the foot of the altar. With liturgical exactness they followed the Monsignor's even pace, cued by *Dominus vobiscum* and the electric chimes, run on split second timing by the altar boys.

Father Stanislaus was still hearing Confessions at midnight, but it was five minutes past the hour before he was able to leave the confessional. He hurried up the aisle to the sacristy, where six altar boys were waiting for him. He glowed as he smiled at them, from unruly hair more or less firmly watered and brushed into place, down past spotless clean but mended surplices to a surprising variety of shoes, brogue, black, tennis and heavy boot. At twelve-seventeen the first two altar boys stepped out of the sacristy, then two more, and two more, and then Father Stanislaus. As he began the prayers at the foot of the altar, some of those in the church took out worn prayer books to follow the Mass. Three old women, in the first pew, with shabby black coats, and heavy shawls for their heads, continued saying the Rosary; effortlessly beads slipped through their fingers, as though they said the Rosary day long, and perhaps they did.

The bells did not ring on time, and sometimes the server forgot his job and had to be nudged by another; but when Father Stanislaus whispered *HOC EST ENIM CORPUS MEUM* the church was hushed, and they could almost hear angels' wings beating about the altar.

It was Christmas, 1947, in the Church of St. Efficientias and in the Church of St. Pastorius. God had come, once again, as a little Child to all His people.

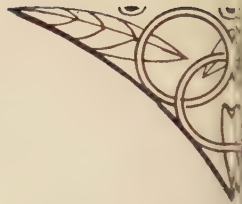
FLOYD ANDERSON

## Plea to All Men

Stranger who drinks with me at the Inn of the World  
A lonely glass against the evening's gloom,  
Do not the stars draw closer in their heavens  
Than we are close within this little room?  
Shall we never speak to one another?  
Eternity hastens while we sip our wine.  
Shall we sit staring coldly, O my brother,  
**Seeing I know your pain, as you know mine?**  
Can we not talk of the one hope that spurs us  
Leaping from soul to soul in broken flame?  
Will there be tears of joy upon our faces  
That, far from home, one calls us still by name?  
And when the hour draws on, and fires are dying,  
Will you not lean across the dark and say:  
Take then this little gift of comfort,  
I have not come so far myself today.  
We have only tonight, my brother,  
Till the long quest for bread and beauty ends!  
Can we put by our pride and knock like children  
At the one gate that makes us more than friends?  
O do not hide from me your journey's anguish.  
Tomorrow we may both be lifted up  
Because we broke the pilgrim's bread together  
And drank of faith within each other's cup.

ELIZABETH M. ODELL





## My Marriage Course

Books on marriage are perennially popular. Young people contemplating Matrimony are always eager for some pointers on this life. Marriage courses have come into demand at many colleges, universities and even in our high schools. They are usually well attended. The seriousness with which the subject is studied shows that in this age of lightly entered marriages and too frequent divorce and infidelity, youth still seeks to realize an ideal relationship between man and woman. The young look to older and wiser minds to help them avoid the pitfalls which beset modern couples entering life together. One trouble in many of these books and courses is that the heads which have received them are older but not nearly wise enough. They lack the Christian ideal which alone can make marriage the great and beautiful union to which Christ raised it.

If I were to give such a marriage course, I would base it in part on material from several books which I have recently read. *So! Want To Get Married!* by Dorothy Fremont Grant and *The Art of a Happy Marriage* by Rev. James Magner would help me marshal the pertinent facts, proper attitudes and practical details which should be considered. Both books treat the same material but in a different manner. They are both good as far as they go but they do not go far enough.

Mrs. Grant's book is written in an informal manner and intended for young women. Her style is attractive. Her language is simple and modern in phrasing so as to appeal to the sweet young things to whom it is directed. Father Magner addresses his work to a more general audience. His treatment is much more comprehensive so that we may take it as one of our texts in this theoretical course. Among the subjects discussed are the courtship, details of the wedding, the purpose of marriage, the proper place of sex, the very practical matters of money and children.

All of these matters are important and should be carefully considered by young men and women before marriage. In fact they should be considered before one has become so blindly infatuated that serious things do not seem important when compared to this "great love."

An entirely different treatise on matrimony is contained in a little booklet, *Companions for Eternity*, a translation of a work by A. M. Carre, O.P., published by Blackfriars Publications, Oxford. This booklet could label as a "must" in my marriage course. It is, as the author tells, based on three conferences given to students in the Latin Quarter Paris. It is the "statement of the Catholic case for marriage in terms suitable to their psychology." He shows us married love in all its purity and with all the difficulties which beset it, since it is a union of sinful creatures. The full implications of marriage as a vocation, a state of life, are made clear. St. Paul has compared marriage with the union between Christ and His Church. Father Carre shows us how the grace of the sacrament is always with us in the humble everyday life and help realize in the Christian home the same beautiful love, devotion and sacrifice as that which exists between Christ and His Church.

The last part of the booklet treats of the mission of the man and of the woman and of how they complement and fulfill each other.

I have already said that I would recommend the first two books to young people considering marriage but still sufficiently whole of heart to realize that reason as well as emotion must prevail when choosing a partner for life. *Companions for Eternity* could also be read by them with profit but I would especially recommend it to engaged or married couples and urge them to read it together. It will help them to gain deeper insight into this love which God has given them. They will learn how best to cooperate with the grace of Matrimony so that their love may grow and take on the characteristics of divine love. When young people are intensely interested in saving each others' souls and each is willing to make the sacrifices necessary to help the other grow in grace, the practical problems previously mentioned will be more readily solved. Questions of planned parenthood and of keeping up with the times will not even arise if the first purpose in their minds is to serve God and each other.

These last remarks may indicate that I consider the spiritual approach of Father Carre more important than that used by Mrs. Grant and Father Magner. In a sense, I do. The latter two presuppose for the most part that young people who are entering marriage today will face pretty much the same problems as their parents faced. They ignore the fact that our whole social order is in a state of revolution. The United States has been slower than European countries to feel the change but events are moving faster and faster. God alone knows in what sort of world our children will grow up. The old standards of security are vanishing. Couples today must choose whether they will sacrifice independence of thought and action to a system of mass production for the sake of a weekly pay check, or develop and use their talents and

abilities so as to best serve God and their fellow man and trust God's Providence to help them provide their daily wants. Whichever choice is made will have a profound effect on their attitudes and manner of living and a corresponding effect on the children.

On the matter of security, one point in Father Magner's book struck me particularly. He recommends that married couples keep a bank balance of not less than five hundred dollars. Mrs. Grant suggests that they save ten per cent of their income. Both ideas are very good. However, the people they know must have a different earning capacity from those with whom I am acquainted. I am not referring to the very poor or slothful people. I know five couples whose marriages are better than most. Both man and wife are well educated in each case. They have fairly remunerative work. They have good will and strong faith. They are trying to carry out the Pope's suggestions for a truly Christian marriage.

On the other hand, I know many couples who are following more worldly ideas. They are aiming to get ahead by small compromises with the best way of doing things. They are not bad but more "liberal."

No couple of either sort has ever, to my knowledge, had as much as five hundred dollars at one time. Those of the first group have found themselves burdened with the expense of having a baby every year and a half. (They average five children to a family.) Those of the second group average two and a half children. They have trouble saving because they are trying to keep the children well dressed and to keep up a certain social position from which they hope to go a little higher. It is all very well to save ten per cent of a week's wages but it is difficult to do so if the weekly wage does not supply quite enough to get around. This is the usual case today for a working man with a good sized family. It is in many cases the reason why wives work outside the home. It is the exceptional woman who really wants to punch a time clock. All this leads to the social problem of giving a working man a living family wage, which I shall not discuss here.

Those strongly tempted to choose security and worldly advancement at the expense of ideals and principles should realize that as the world is going, they will probably not have their reward either here or hereafter. Our country is the last stronghold of capitalism and the tide of battle here is going against it. The threatening spread of communism, the prospect of atomic warfare, the terrible unrest of whole nations—all these make our faith in the continuance of life as we have known it seem rather silly. Families without strong spiritual foundations and dependence on God are going to go under in the coming storm, indeed many have already gone under before the advance wave of materialism and paganism.



Husband and wife can do much to gain God's favor and blessing their union by their individual and family prayers. Saying night prayers together is one of the best insurances I know for marital harmony. It is impossible to hold a grievance when you habitually kneel together and say the *Our Father*. These prayers can gain in efficacy when we have a heavenly advocate praying along with us. Holy Mother Church has recognized many married saints who might be taken as family patrons. The Holy Family is, of course, the ideal.

I have recently read of another in a biography of Blessed Margaret Clitherow by Margaret T. Monro. She was an English convert to the Faith during the perilous days of Queen Elizabeth. She was a young housewife noted for her charm and vivacity. However, she did not hesitate to choose death rather than renounce the Faith. She chose to die the more difficult death of being crushed rather than the comparatively easy one of hanging, in order to spare her children the ordeal of being forced to testify against her. Her children illustrate her great influence for good in the remarkable fact that, although only fourteen, twelve and ten respectively at the time of her death, and although brought up by Protestants (their father was a Protestant), the two sons became priests and the daughter became a nun. Blessed Margaret has been chosen as a patroness by two Catholic women's groups in England because her difficulties, particularly in securing Catholic education for her children, in many ways were like those which Catholics in England are facing today. Modern Americans who may also live to see days of persecution, but will in any case face the difficulties of living in an unbelieving world, will do well to add to their family prayers, "Blessed Margaret Clitherow, pray for us."

As a conclusion to my marriage course we would read aloud the instruction which is read before the marriage service, although we will already be familiar with it. I would urge these young people to make the ceremony of rereading it along with their marriage vows on each wedding anniversary. The beautiful words of Holy Mother Church will help them recall, in the midst of everyday routine or even drabness, the idealism with which they began their life together and help them start another year with renewed zeal.

DOROTHY WILLOCK

# Book Reviews

## Christ With Us

### THE DRY WOOD

By Caryl Houselander  
Sheed and Ward  
Price: \$3.00

Men are weary of seeking truth in the fulcrum of factual information (they have reached the perfection of statistics and research, but their hearts are still void of wisdom). Men are also weary of living on past glories or in the future of the "progress" myth. They are nauseated by the unrealities and fictions and sentimentalities with which they hide from the enigmatic reality of the here and now. They will give their allegiance only to those who can explain life in the intensity of the present moment. They are moved, therefore, by the pseudo-realists who say, "Here is *real* life—it is one vast sewer of despair," because that's what their own lives look like to their own superficial view. Or they will give their allegiance to a Christianity which can take the garbage can of contemporary life and show Christ present *now*, redeeming *now*, transforming *now*, the rich and poor, old and young, Protestant and Catholic and Jew and pagan refuse of our own apartment houses and offices and parishes. This is Caryl Houselander's gift. She can see Christ behind the smoke screen of our human sins and limitations. She can cut through the camouflage of secularism to show men as they really are, desperately in need of God, and to show Christ dispensing Himself to humanity through His Church.

*The Dry Wood* is Caryl Houselander's first novel, set in a slum parish of London. It is a story of sanctity and sin and God's grace moving men's hearts in a setting of intense ordinariness. Hundreds of little touches of ordinariness shield the novel from any slight falsification of facts, so that Christ may show through the more clearly. When the pastor hears Confessions, he is yet bothered by his rheumatism. The pious of the parish are often tedious and self-righteous. The rectory housekeeper is fittingly called "The Test of Faith." The parish church is a monument of cluttered ugliness and bad taste, and the author sees that, yet sees that to some it looks beautiful even when it isn't, and that it is often in reality beautiful. She sees the candles like stars at a High Mass and the altar boys like little cherubim. There isn't a grain of sentimentality in the book, but it is filled with awe and compassion and love, and a great deal of wonderful humor.

The story revolves around a central character and a thesis. The focal character is a seven-year-old child who is crippled and mute from birth. The thesis is that twentieth century sanctity is child-like sanctity and that the sufferings of pure and innocent children are needed to redeem a world sunk in vanity and pride.

The author's compassion and humor take the bitterness out of her sometimes very penetrating criticisms of such things as over-emphasis on liturgical reform, and youth movements which pour all their budding apostles into the same mold.

To my mind the best thing of all, in a book which is excellent throughout, is the charity and clarity with which Caryl Houselander views Solly Lee, the book's most despicable character. I doubt if there can be found anywhere so good an analysis of the destitution of the modern Jew.

PETER MICHAELS

## St. Catherine of Siena

### THE GREATEST CATHERINE

By Michael de la Bedoyere

Bruce

Price: \$3.00

her fellow men. She too lived in troubled times but had the courage to speak to her contemporaries, whether kings, Cardinals or Pope, in urging them to reform their lives in order to combat the evils of their day. We are all called to be saints, not "men of distinction" or protagonists of the "new look," so let us stop "playing safe" and be strong and uncompromising in restoring all things to Christ.

Catherine Benincasa was born just six hundred years ago into a humble working man's family in Siena, Italy. Her early devotion to prayer and penance incurred the wrath of her family but she soon won them over. She joined the Third Order of Saint Dominic, cared for the sick and the poor, and converted many sinners. Although outspoken, she was intelligent and charming and soon had many followers. Her country was being torn by wars; the people were restless and rebellious. It was the beginning of the breakdown of a balanced and united Christendom. Catherine urged the use of spiritual weapons to restore peace and order. The problem of her day was to bring about reform in the church whereas the problem in our day is to reform the temporal order, to integrate religion and life. What we can learn from Catherine is the tremendous power of spiritual weapons.

Michael de la Bedoyere is the ideal person to give us a clear insight into Catherine's character and personality, her significance to this generation, because he himself is an active lay apostle, editor of *The Catholic Herald*, and author of *Christianity in the Market Place*, *No Dreamers Weak*, and other books calculated to stimulate vigorous Catholic Action.

DOREEN O'SULLIVAN

## Christian Commandos

### FISHERS OF MEN

By Maxence van der Meersch

Sheed and Ward

Price: \$3.00

Today nations are fast becoming buried under the mire of materialism which threatens to extinguish the one light that can bring order out of chaos—the light of Christ in the hearts of men. Materialistic paganism which knows no class distinction is sweeping through the working world and leaving behind despair in the souls of men who should be following the footsteps of the Worker Who years ago left them the means of finding peace on earth.

Since the priest cannot enter the factory gates or office doors as a direct means of influence, it is the young worker himself who will have to become an apostle of his fellow men and with God's help lead them out of their darkness. This is the purpose of the worldwide Young Christian Worker (Jocist) movement. For anyone not acquainted with this movement, no treatise can so clearly set forth its principles of realism, idealism, and action as does *Fishers of Men*.

Van der Meersch, one of the leading French contemporary novelists, depicts with compassion and understanding the struggles of a young French worker, Pierre Mardych, who arose out of the sordidness of his life to lead a campaign for Christ. The setting of the story is in France but in its essence the story is international for whether it be France or the United States, the young apostle will



encounter similar hatred and ingratitude for the part he has chosen to play in this conquest of souls. The success of the J.O.C. does not manifest itself in sweeping members on to glory, but out of apparent worldly failures it raises its members to undreamed of spiritual heights.

The movement permeated all aspects of Mardyck's life, rescuing him from vice and giving him a purpose for living hitherto unknown. The discovery of man's intimate relationship with God gave him the strength to face the opposition encountered at home, the antagonism of the communists at work, and made a beautiful thing of his love, and success of a marriage which, if measured on a materialistic scale, would have been tagged impossible.

With complete candor Meersch paints a realistic picture of the spiritual growth of this working boy; a picture that perhaps would shock a few sensitive minds, but so would the corrupt conditions of the American work-world if they were openly faced. The book imparts a glorious sense of hope to man—hope founded in Pierre Mardyck and thousands like him who cry: "Christ, apostles, that is what we are! Fishers of men, that is what we are! We, far more than anyone else, come to save that which was lost! And our suffering and labors shall once again redeem the sinfulness of the world."

MARY STAPLES

Copies of the English (Miles) edition of this work are available from Fides Publishers, South Bend, Indiana.

## What Did Chesterton Have?

### PARADOX IN CHESTERTON

By Hugh Kenner  
Sheed and Ward  
Price: \$2.00

It seems now that many if not most of Chesterton's numerous readers looked at him much in the manner of a group of South Sea Islanders watching an aviator servicing his plane. The group of natives

smile as the pilot checks the air in his tires. They laugh boisterously as he swings the propeller. They howl with glee as he lubricates the engine. They roll on the ground, holding their sides as he fills the tank. It is amazing how ludicrous the activities of a competent man can be, if you haven't the least idea what he is about. Well, Chesterton was like that. The task that he set himself to, and so soon how accomplished, was as foreign to the modern mind as aeronautics is to the South Sea Islander. Chesterton saw that reality was all of a Oneness. The modern man looks upon reality as a chain of reactions as unrelated as the sections of a news reel; Chesterton saw reality in the full round. The modern mind comprehends nothing until it is reduced to the dull dimensions of length and breadth. It is the nature of the Chestertonian vision that concerns the author of this book.

That Chesterton should utilize paradox to a sometimes unbearable degree is no more surprising than a fisherman should smell of fish. Chesterton was trying to get to the roots of things, and the roots of things are buried in paradox. In his most profound statements that a man can make are of necessity paradoxical. It is true whether you say "In one God there are three Divine Persons," or, "the strength of a martyr lies in his weakness," or, "one cannot see the problem if it is too close to it."

Chesterton saw this analogical aspect of reality before he saw anything else. As the author points out, Chesterton intuitively grasped the universality of paradox. For the human mind, paradox is a two-bladed instrument as indispensable to the philosopher, as a scissors is to a tailor.

Mr. Kenner inquires into this analogical nature of being. He goes back to Aquinas and points out the agreement in principle and similarity in method

between these two defenders of the Faith. Then he analyzes the various uses to which G. K. put his spiritual weapon. The paradoxes that Chesterton saw made him prone to use paradox rhetorically. It furnished plots for his short stories. It is the journalistic *peg* upon which he hung his essays.

The author admits, as well he must, that the Prince of Paradox at times made much of a good thing. But, he hastens to insist that it *is* a good thing. If you own in Chesterton's paradox, at least admit fairly that you are drowning in an abyss. His contemporaries sit themselves down at either end of a see-saw, and, at that, a see-saw without a fulcrum. One mind sits upon authority; the other upon individual freedom. One cries out for Justice; the other cries out for Mercy. One denies that spirit is real; the other denies that matter is real. The strength of Chesterton lies in this: that he saw in the acts of His Creator apparent contradictions. He saw that this Creator was a God Who could neither deceive nor be deceived. He concluded that these apparent contradictions were the blessed revelations of a merciful Father to children who can only see as through a glass darkly. He sensed behind the curtain of paradox a Beatific Vision which hid itself from it blind us.

ED WILLOCK

## A Not Unlikely Saint

MATT TALBOT, ALCOHOLIC

By Albert H. Dolan, O. Carm.

The Carmelite Press

Englewood, N. J.

Price: 50c; \$1.00 bound.

One hurried and over-simplified explanation of why people drink so much today is that when you rob men of absolutes, they will become absolutely plastered. If a man cannot expend himself

on a major cause, he will deplete himself in a minor tavern. This tiny booklet advances neither of these arguments. It merely tells how a man gave up drinking by doing the thing which, when suggested, is usually called, "impractical." This man turned to God in a spiritual, social, and physical way. To escape the tavern he went to church. For conversation he talked to God. For stimulation he drank of the Holy Ghost. For his trouble he has undoubtedly merited heaven, and all, if millions of prayers are answered, be canonized by the Church.

The Church is the most reluctant institution in the world to canonize a saint. Of the many called to canonization by the daily press, the Church chooses at a few. Matt Talbot was not the kind of man that the press would glorify, but he is the kind of man that many a journalist could profitably imitate, not in their work but in their leisure. The Church knows a good thing when she sees it. The teetotaler thinks that giving up drink is the least that a man could do. The Church, having had more experience with men, knows that giving up drink often calls for heroics. In the case of Matt Talbot it called for, and got, heroic sanctity.

Talbot can teach by his example and intercede by his merits for all those who now they are incapable of avoiding drink. He is the logical patron for Alcoholics Anonymous. He resisted the appeal of the tavern and of the advertisement. He was crucified to Calvary because Calvary is lighter.

This booklet is a brief sketch of his simple and beautiful life. This is not so much an example of what a man can do if he tries, as it is an example of what God can do if we let Him.

ED WILLOCK

## Workers Hungry For God

DEAR BISHOP

By Catherine de Hueck

Sheed and Ward

Price: \$1.75

This is short (96 pages), very readable, and packed with meaty, thought-provoking material for everyone, priest or layman. The priest because it deals with the lost sheep of his flock; the layman because he is often the only one who can reach



them and bring them back to the fold—they are usually beyond the reach of shepherd.

The book grew out of two experiences of the Baroness de Hueck—her life in this country when she had to work like the Katzie in her book; and assignment during the war from a member of the American Hierarchy—to find out what American youth thought of God, His Church, churches in general, their reaction to communism and democracy.

The answer was discouraging, among the saloons, the restaurants, the hotels, the factories; "desert," as she calls it. There aren't the ninety-nine saved and lost; but the ninety-nine lost, and "no one caring about the workers, right with the workers are . . . My backwash, blowsy streets. A wilderness waiting for a sort of missionary. Shades of Father Marquette, Father Jogues, and all the martyred Jesuits! who is to follow in your footsteps?"

A beginning has been made in France, where priests are down in the black backwash streets with the workmen, working with them in factories, shops, stores; celebrating Mass with fellow-workmen at night, whenever it is possible. But isn't this primarily a job for the layman, working with the clergy? Who can reach these people? Most of them would shy away from a priest as from a pestilence. They can only be reached by someone working with them, in their own environment, whom they will recognize as one of their own, in whom they will have confidence, whom they will trust, whom they will believe. A beginning has been made through the Jocists, the Catholic Worker, Friendship House, and such activities. But the surface of what can be done has only been scratched.

Get *Dear Bishop* and read it. It is guaranteed to dispel complacency, lead to action, and renew our charity toward our brother sheep who are lost in the cement desert.

FLOYD ANDERSON

## Christ Hidden

### VIPERS' TANGLE

By Francois Mauriac  
Sheed and Ward  
Price: \$3.00

While this purports to be a first-person account of an old man and his avarice, it is really, by intention, a tale of complacent Catholicism hiding the face of Christ from those He came to save. It is a magnificent novel, beautifully and skillfully written.

Although it first appeared some years ago, this is the first American edition.

The book is written with so much feeling that it must have some autobiographical origins. Mauriac was himself out of the Church for many years. The hypocrisy, pharisaism and mediocrity of "good Catholics" must have hit him, too, at a distance from Christ. In this story his "good Catholics" are well-bred, pious. They are educated at schools run by outstanding religious orders. But they do not really believe, to the point of resting their lives on the Christianity they profess. It becomes ever more evident that their lives are oriented to Mammon. The whole tragedy of making religion a thing of superficial practices is summed up by one of the characters, a young woman deserted by a worthless husband whom she adores. When it is suggested that she turn to God, she cannot "see the connection."

The situation Mauriac describes in this book is not foreign to our society. Many a pagan who takes refuge from his own despair in drink or lust, and who has no illusions about his own virtue, can nevertheless see the connection between Christ's teachings and the morality of daily life which is missed by average churchgoers. Indeed, mankind knows instinctively what ought to be done and will take a pearl of great price when he discovers it, and will always be scandalized by those who, claiming to have found it, do not sell all they have. No one expresses these truths better than Francois Mauriac.

CAROL JACKSON



## St. Augustine

### ST. AUGUSTINE: FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY

trans. by L. A. Arand.

Ancient Christian Writers, 3)

newman

price: \$2.50

work of St. Augustine more popularly known as the *Enciridion*. It is not a thematic exposition of the three theological virtues; rather it is a summary of the whole doctrine linked to these great virtues. There are several rather lengthy discussions of problems that agitated the mind of St. Augustine while he was writing the book; yet, on the whole, there is a timelessness to it that makes it a happy choice for inclusion in this series. A short introduction, notes and an index increase its value for the reader.

This is the third volume in a series of translations from the works of the ancient Christian writers, which is being produced under the editorship of Johannes Quasten and J. C. Plumpe. The present volume is a translation of

J. V. C.

## THE CHRISTIAN CLASSICS

The writings of the Fathers of the Church, long out of print, are now appearing in new translations.

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**Tomorrow shall the iniquity of the  
earth be abolished: and the Savior  
of the world shall reign over us.**

**Alleluia!**